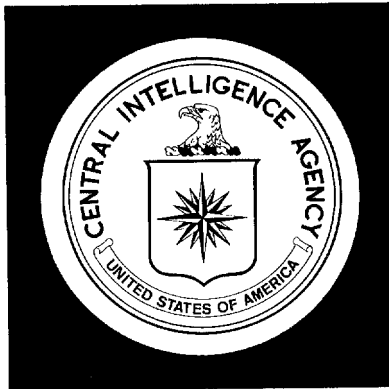


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*The Likelihood of Sino-Soviet Hostilities:  
A Progress Report on a Quantitative Project*

**Top Secret**

PR 76-10064J

3 September 1976

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**DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE**  
**OFFICE OF POLITICAL RESEARCH**

Progress Report No. 17

3 September 1976

**THE LIKELIHOOD OF SINO-SOVIET HOSTILITIES**

This project consists of two quantitative approaches to Sino-Soviet relations. A team of analysts, drawn from various components of the CIA and concerned with different aspects of Chinese and Soviet affairs, examines on a continuing basis evidence on the possibility of one or another level of Sino-Soviet hostilities. The analysts' latest numerical assessments of the likelihood of such hostilities, calculated according to the Bayesian formula of probabilities, are presented in the bar graph on page 2. Below this, a second graph shows the movement of the group's assessments over the past few months. The second part of this project is a chart of overall Sino-Soviet tensions, based upon subjective evaluations by the participants. Progress reports will be published on a bimonthly basis by the Office of Political Research.

**PRINCIPAL TRENDS:**

During the past two months, there has been relatively little interaction between the USSR and China, and the level of tension has remained virtually unchanged.

New Soviet defenses and military installations continue to appear in the Far East (items 6, 17, 18). There are no other signs of impending hostilities, however, and the probabilities of the various scenarios on page 2 remain quite low.

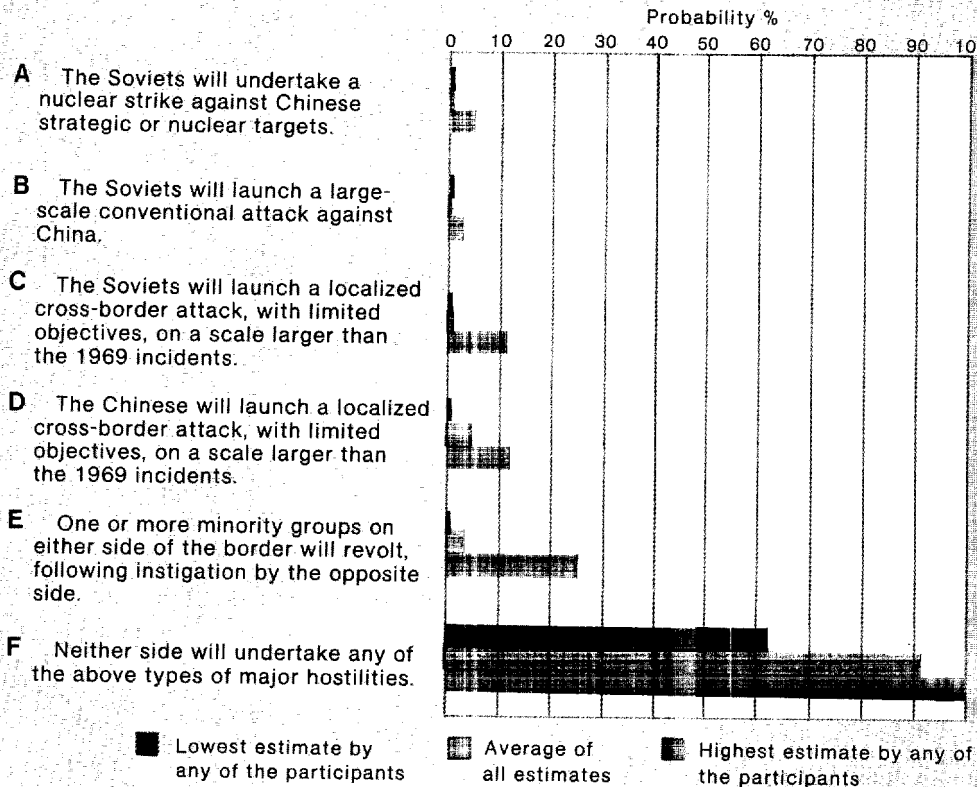
NOTE—Comments on these reports will be welcomed by [redacted]  
[redacted] of the Office of Political Research, who is coordinating this project.

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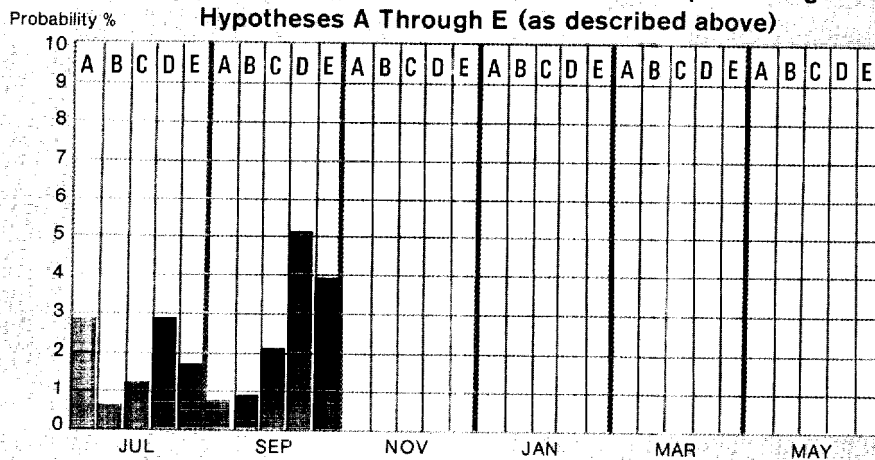
## A Bayesian Analysis of the Likelihood of Sino-Soviet Hostilities

Before 1 March 1977

Current Status of the Assessment -- as of 1 September



### A Time Chart Showing the Movement of the Group's Averages for Hypotheses A Through E (as described above)



NOTE: For the assessments from June 1974 thru June 1975 see OPR 501-5, 11 Dec. 1974, OPR 501-9, 22 May 1975, and PR76-10055, 2 July 1976.

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ITEMS OF EVIDENCE CONSIDERED IN  
THE REVISION OF 27 AUGUST:

1. The PRC Ambassador [ ] stated that the acceleration of China's nuclear missile program since 1969 has now produced sufficient mid-range nuclear missiles to destroy all major cities of the USSR; consequently, this has alleviated the threat of a preemptive strike by the USSR. [ ]

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2. The USSR Council of Ministers sent a message to the PRC State Council on 30 July 1976 expressing "sincere compassion" and "condolences" in connection with the Chinese earthquake. (FBIS Soviet Union Daily Report, 2 Aug, [ ])

3. A Kazhakstan paper published anti-Maoist poems and songs allegedly written by citizens of Sinkiang and brought out of China by a Uighur poet who had recently "escaped." (FBIS Soviet Union Daily Report, 29 Jul, [ ])

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[ ]

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5. [ ] Mikhail Kapitsa, Chief of the First Far Eastern Department, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He claimed that the Soviets had traded 6 Chinese for the crew of the Soviet helicopter, but that the Chinese still held 3 Soviets and they refused to discuss their release. He expressed concern about the role of Chiang Ching. She was referred to as the "Empress Dowager." The Soviets want to know what her power base is. Kapitsa said that current relations between the USSR and the PRC are much improved over 1969. At present both sides have agreed to a line that neither wishes to cross, hence, there is no need for better state-to-state relations. When the PRC is stronger, it will be easier for the Chinese to come to an agreement. He thinks that equanimous relations can be established in the next 5 to 10 years. [ ]

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6. The Soviet Union has recently completed a fourth naval shipyard in the Far East at Sovetskaya Gavan on the Siberian mainland west of Sakhalin Island. This expansion of shipbuilding capacity is linked to the growing activity of the Soviet Pacific fleet in Asian waters. (New York Times, 20 Jul, [ ])

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7. China has been accused by TASS, the Soviet news agency, of planning to use the conference of non-aligned nations in Sri Lanka to impose its will on Third World nations and to get them to struggle with China against the super powers. (London Times, 5 Aug, [ ])

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[REDACTED]

8. Russian land and air forces now deployed along China's northern frontier have been strengthened recently in readiness for large-scale maneuvers when the harvest is over. It is unlikely, however, that all the men will return to central or eastern regions of the Soviet Union after the exercises end in late October.

The new Russian strategic railway designed to supply the 45 divisions now permanently stationed to the east of Lake Balkhash will be "partially operational" by the end of next year. The track is being laid at high speed by Russian construction units and engineers some 30 miles north of the Trans-Siberian line to minimize the risk of sabotage by Chinese militia. (London Daily Telegraph, 2 Aug,

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16. During 17-24 August, Chinese media marked the 8th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia with the customary spate of reports attacking a variety of Soviet actions, especially Moscow's relations with East European countries. (FBIS, 17-24 Aug, [REDACTED])

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[REDACTED]

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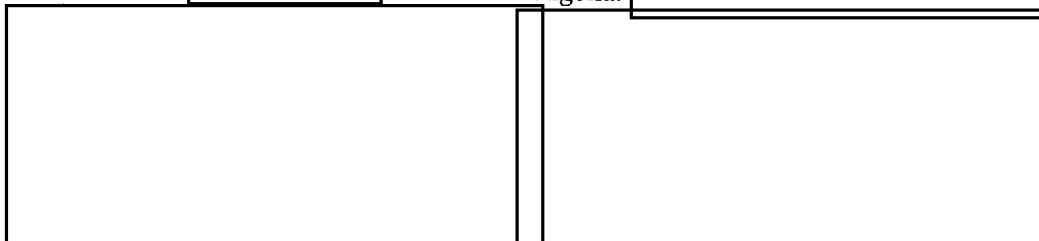


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18. [redacted] the presence of a new Soviet military installation [redacted] in central Mongolia. [redacted]

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19. The European Communist Party Conference, after months of preparatory wrangling, finally took place 29-30 June in East Berlin. Though not directly concerned with China, there was speculation as to the extent to which the Conference would serve as a forum for condemnation, one way or another, of China. The consensus atmosphere among the European Parties was that this would be unacceptable, and aside from a brief salvo from Brezhnev, the question of China was left unaddressed at the Conference. (Various Press throughout the period, [redacted])



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## ANALYTIC TECHNIQUES USED IN THIS PROJECT:

The graphs on page 2 show the range and average of analysts' estimates of the likelihood of hostilities; the Bayesian method of calculation is used. This method, as applied here, systematizes a series of appraisals of incoming intelligence made independently by individual analysts. Every participant weighs each new piece of relevant data in terms of the hypotheses shown, which, for the purpose of this exercise, are considered to be mutually exclusive. Simple mathematical calculations, applying the new evidence to the analysts' previous estimates, then yield updated estimates, which serve as the basis for the chart.

The chart on page 6 is an ongoing measurement of the level of Sino-Soviet tensions. It is not a Bayesian analysis: no specific hypotheses are posed and no mathematical calculations are made on the basis of prior estimates. Instead, at the start and at bimonthly intervals, each of the participants selects a position on the scale of 0 to 100 to represent his best judgment of the current general state of tensions between Moscow and Peking. (The points 10 and 70 have been designated as reference points, as explained on the chart.) Small shifts from the analysts' initial positions may not prove to be meaningful, but abrupt or sustained movement in the lines will be significant.

The measurement of the degree of general tension should be considered as complementary to—but independent of—the estimates of the likelihood of hostilities. Taken together, the two approaches ensure continuing examination of the probabilities of conflict and of the overall state of relations between the USSR and China.

The items of new evidence considered each period are identified by the participants themselves, consolidated by OPR, and then resubmitted to all the analysts for their evaluations—both in terms of the Bayes hypotheses and as factors bearing on the general state of tension.

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